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GENERAL NOTES.

The minutes of the fifteenth meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, held at Cleveland, December 31, 1912, to January 2, 1913, are printed in *Science* for April 25, 1913. Abstracts are given of the thirty-six papers read at the meeting.

Two important papers dealing with the distribution of stars in space were read by Messrs. DYSON and EDDINGTON at the meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of London, held on March 14, 1913. Mr. DYSON's paper treated the stars in CARRINGTON's circumpolar catalogue, Mr. EDDINGTON's the bright stars. Abstracts of these papers will be given in our next number.

The *Observatory* reports that the transfer of the Solar Physics Observatory to Cambridge University took place on April 1, 1913. The staff is constituted as follows: Director, H. F. NEWALL; assistant director, F. J. M. STRATTON; observer in meteorological physics, C.T.R. WILSON; senior observers, F. E. BAXANDALL and C. P. BUTLER; junior observers, W. E. ROLSTON and W. MOSS.

Some idea of the important work being done by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada in promoting a general interest in the science may be gained from the account of the annual meeting printed in the January-February, 1913, number of the *Journal* of the society. The society has 421 active members distributed among seven centers. At each center regular meetings have been held, varying in number from twenty-one at Toronto to six or seven at some of the smaller centers. Some of these meetings—particularly at Ottawa—are devoted to the presentation and discussion of technical papers, the others to the presentation of more popular accounts of recent progress in astronomy and related sciences, not only by active members of the society, but also by visiting scientific men.

Director FRITZ COHN, of the Kgl. Astron. Rechen-Institut, Berlin, has issued a circular letter proposing a plan for co-operation in the systematic observation of the minor planets. A complete translation of the letter is printed in *Popular Astronomy* for May, 1913. For the observation of the known asteroids, it is suggested that the existing organization of photographic observers, now including five stations, be enlarged, and that the visual observers also organize and distribute among them the various objects, with the aid of the central station (the Rechen-Institut) in such a manner as to insure the adequate observation of each object, while preventing unnecessary duplication of measures. In general two or three measures of a known asteroid suffice to provide the data needed for orbit correction.

The newly discovered planets require somewhat more attention. They are usually discovered by photography and, in general, will be faint objects. Discovery should be promptly announced and the announcement sent by the central station to the visual observers; or, when feasible, by the discoverer to some visual observer direct (M. WOLF now sends such announcements to MM. PALISA and JAVELLE). Five or six accurate visual observations distributed over a period of from six to eight weeks are needed as the basis for a good orbit.

The Rechen-Institut is prepared to act as a central station and to give all possible assistance by furnishing lists of planets in need of observation and ephemerides when desirable, and by computing necessary orbits.

It is to be hoped that the proposition can be put into execution, for at the present time some asteroids are observed more often than necessary, while many others are neglected, and some, through neglect, are lost.

It is with regret that we record the death, early in April of this year of F. M. RISTENPART, director of the National Observatory, Santiago, Chile.

The following notes have been taken from *Science:*

The National Academy of Sciences celebrated the semi-centennial anniversary of its foundation on April 22d, 23d, and

24th, exactly fifty years after its first meeting. It was a most successful meeting, with the largest attendance of members in the history of the academy. There was no program of technical papers, but in its place a series of addresses. Dr. IRA REMSEN, the president of the academy, at the first session read an address on the history of the academy, and then introduced President ARTHUR T. HADLEY, of Yale University, who spoke on "The Relation of Science to Higher Education in America." He was followed by Dr. ARTHUR SCHUSTER, secretary of the Royal Society of London, who spoke on "International Cooperation in Research." At the afternoon session Dr. GEORGE E. HALE, director of the Mount Wilson Solar Observatory, gave an address on "The Earth and Sun as Magnets." On the morning of the following day, Dr. J. C. KAPTEYN, director of the Astronomical Laboratory of the University of Groningen, gave an address on "The Structure of the Universe." Dr. THEODOR H. BOVERI, of the University of Würzburg, was to have spoken on "The Material Basis of Heredity," but was unable to be present owing to ill health. The Watson medal for astronomical research was presented to Dr. J. C. KAPTEYN, the Draper medal for astrophysical research to the French Ambassador for M. HENRI DESLANDRES, the Agassiz medal for oceangraphical research to the Norwegian minister for Dr. JOHAN HJÖRT, and the Comstock prize of the value of $1,500 for research in radiant energy, to Professor R. A. MILLIKAN, of the University of Chicago.

The adjudicators of the Adams prize of the University of Cambridge report that the two essays submitted to them with the following titles are of distinction: "The Theory of Radiation," by Mr. S. B. McLAREN, and "The Fundamental Spectra of Astrophysics," by Dr. J. W. NICHOLSON, between whom the prize is divided in equal shares.

At a meeting of the electors to the Plumian professorship of astronomy in the University of Cambridge, held on April 19th, Mr. A. S. EDDINGTON, chief assistant at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, was elected to the professorship, in succession to the late Sir GEORGE DARWIN.

Mr. A. R. HINKS, F.R.S., chief assistant at the Cambridge University Observatory, has been appointed Gresham professor of astronomy, London, in succession to the late Mr. S. A. SAUNDER.

A tablet in honor of Dr. SAMUEL PIERPONT LANGLEY was unveiled in the Smithsonian Institution on May 6th. Addresses were made by Dr. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL and Dr. JOHN A. BRASHEAR.

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC, HELD AT THE STUDENTS' OBSERVATORY, IN BERKELEY, ON APRIL 11, 1913.

Two meetings of the society were held on this date, the first at 3:00 P. M. and the second at 8:00 P. M. Both were programmed as features of the third annual session of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies, of which the Astronomical Society is a constituent member. The annual sessions of the Pacific Association had been called for the 10th, 11th and 12th days of April, 1913.

The scientific program for the Astronomical Society was arranged by Professor A. O. LEUSCHNER, director of the Students' Observatory, and to him is due the credit for a day of unusual interest and pleasure to the members and friends of the society.

The afternoon session was called to order at 3:00 P. M. by President ALEX. G. MCADIE, and the following papers were presented and (with one exception) read by their authors, the reading in each case being followed by a general discussion by all present:—

"A Plea for More Amateur Variable-Star Observers," by EDWARD GRAY, of Eldridge, Cal.

"The Davidson Zenith and Transit Telescope," by OSCAR W. LANZENDORF.

"The Cluster Variable RR *Lyræ*," by CARL CLARENCE KIESS.

"Class B Stars Whose Spectrum Contain Bright Hydrogen Lines," by PAUL WILLARD MERRILL (read by Mr. EINARRSON).

"The Visual Region of Spectrum in Brighter Class A Stars," by EMMA PHŒBE WATERMAN.

At this point in the proceedings the meeting adjourned to attend in a body the reception which had been courteously offered by the President of the University and Mrs. WHEELER to all members of the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies. A pleasant half hour was spent in the presidential mansion and its hospitality gratefully appreciated. An opportunity, at the same time, was given to members to meet the representatives of other societies attending the sessions.

At 6:30 many of the members dined together at the Hotel Cloyne Court, on the Ridge Road, and it was noticed that the contemplation of